

Bharatiya Jnana Parampara (IKS)

Social Sciences and Humanities

Unit-wise 10 Mark Long Questions with Answers

UNIT 1: Introduction to IKS

Q1. What is Knowledge? Explain the meaning, subject, object and sources of knowledge according to Indian Knowledge System.

[10 Marks]

Answer:

Knowledge, in the Indian tradition, is known as 'Jnana' or 'Vidya'. It refers to the awareness, understanding, and realization of truth about the self, the world, and the ultimate reality. Indian Knowledge System (IKS) has a very systematic and deep understanding of what knowledge means, who can acquire it, what its objects are, and how it can be obtained.

Meaning of Knowledge: In Indian philosophy, knowledge is not merely information. It is the direct experience or realization of truth. The Vedas define knowledge as that which liberates the human being from ignorance and suffering. Knowledge is divided into two types: Para Vidya (higher knowledge, i.e., knowledge of the self and Brahman) and Apra Vidya (lower knowledge, i.e., knowledge of worldly matters like science, arts, and grammar).

Subject of Knowledge (Pramata): The subject is the knower — the conscious being who seeks and acquires knowledge. In Indian philosophy, the human being with a purified mind and intellect is considered capable of attaining true knowledge.

Object of Knowledge (Prameya): The object is what is to be known. This includes the external world (nature, things, people), the inner world (mind, emotions, self), and the ultimate reality (Brahman or the absolute truth).

Sources of Knowledge (Pramana): Indian epistemology identifies several Pramanas or valid means of knowledge: (1) Pratyaksha — direct perception through the senses; (2) Anumana — inference, drawing conclusions from observations; (3) Upamana — comparison or analogy; (4) Shabda — verbal testimony, especially of the Vedas and trusted sages; (5) Arthapatti — postulation, assuming a fact to explain a known fact; (6) Anupalabdhi — non-perception, used to know the absence of something.

The Vedas are considered the primary and most reliable source of knowledge in IKS. The Four Vedas — Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, and Atharvaveda — collectively form the foundation of all Indian knowledge. The Upanishads (Vedanta) explore the philosophical dimensions of this knowledge. Overall, IKS presents a holistic view of knowledge that integrates the spiritual, intellectual, and practical dimensions of human life.

Q2. Discuss the importance of the Four Vedas in human life and explain the aims and objectives of Arthashastra.

[10 Marks]

Answer:

The Four Vedas hold a central position in Indian culture and civilization. They are considered *Apaurusheya*, meaning not created by any human but revealed to the sages (Rishis) through deep meditation. Each Veda serves a unique purpose in guiding human life.

Rigveda: It is the oldest of the four Vedas and contains hymns (Richas) addressed to various deities like Agni, Indra, Varuna, and others. It is the primary source of philosophical and spiritual thought in India. It promotes the idea of universal brotherhood through the concept of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'.

Yajurveda: It contains formulas and procedures for rituals (Yajnas). It teaches the importance of action, sacrifice, and duty. The Yajurveda bridges the material and spiritual worlds through the performance of sacred rituals.

Samaveda: It is the Veda of music and melodies. Its verses are meant to be sung during rituals. It is the foundation of Indian classical music and promotes harmony, rhythm, and emotional balance.

Atharvaveda: It deals with healing, medicine, magic, and everyday problems of life. It represents the practical side of Vedic knowledge and is closely related to Ayurveda.

Importance of Vedas in Human Life: The Vedas guide individuals in all aspects of life — spiritual, moral, social, and material. They promote values like truth (Satya), non-violence (Ahimsa), duty (Dharma), and devotion. The Vedic way of life encourages balance between material prosperity and spiritual liberation.

Arthashastra — Aims and Objectives: The Arthashastra is a treatise on statecraft, economic policy, and military strategy written by Kautilya (also known as Chanakya) during the Mauryan period. Its main objectives are: (1) to establish a well-governed state that ensures the welfare of all citizens; (2) to promote economic prosperity through agriculture, trade, and taxation; (3) to maintain law and order through a strong and just administration; (4) to protect the state from external threats through diplomacy and warfare strategies; (5) to promote the four goals of human life — Dharma (righteousness), Artha (wealth), Kama (desire), and Moksha (liberation). The Arthashastra is a timeless guide for governance and is considered one of the greatest works of political science in the world.

UNIT 2: Indian System of Thought on Epistemology

Q3. Explain the Vedic and Non-Vedic schools of Indian philosophy with special reference to epistemology.

[10 Marks]

Answer:

Indian philosophy is one of the richest philosophical traditions in the world. It is broadly divided into two categories — Astika (orthodox) schools that accept the authority of the Vedas and Nastika (heterodox) schools that do not accept the Vedas as the supreme authority. Both traditions have made significant contributions to epistemology, the study of knowledge.

Vedic (Astika) Schools: There are six classical Vedic schools known as Shad Darshanas: Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Samkhya, Yoga, Purva Mimamsa, and Uttara Mimamsa (Vedanta). Each school has its own approach to epistemology.

Samkhya-Yoga: Samkhya accepts three Pramanas — perception, inference, and verbal testimony. It explains reality through two eternal principles: Purusha (consciousness) and Prakriti (matter). Yoga, based on Samkhya, emphasizes direct experience and meditation as the highest path to knowledge.

Nyaya-Vaisheshika: Nyaya is the school of logic and analytical inquiry. It accepts four Pramanas — perception, inference, comparison, and verbal testimony. It emphasizes reasoning and debate as tools for finding truth. Vaisheshika complements Nyaya by classifying all reality into categories (Padarthas) and advocating atomic theory.

Purva and Uttara Mimamsa: Purva Mimamsa focuses on the interpretation of Vedic rituals and accepts the Vedas as the absolute source of knowledge. Uttara Mimamsa (Vedanta) focuses on the philosophical teachings of the Upanishads and accepts self-realization (Atma Jnana) as the highest form of knowledge.

Non-Vedic (Nastika) Schools: These include Charvaka, Buddhism, and Jainism. Charvaka is a materialist school that accepts only direct perception (Pratyaksha) as valid knowledge and rejects inference and verbal testimony. It denies the existence of God and the soul. Buddhism accepts perception and inference as valid means of knowledge and emphasizes the Middle Path — avoiding extreme materialism and extreme spiritualism. Jainism introduces the concept of Anekantavada (many-sidedness of truth) and Syadvada (conditional predication), which state that truth is relative and can be understood from multiple perspectives.

In conclusion, Indian epistemology is rich and diverse. Both Vedic and Non-Vedic schools have contributed to a sophisticated understanding of how human beings can acquire true and valid knowledge.

Q4. What are the Four Purusharthas? Explain their significance in human life according to Indian philosophy.

[10 Marks]

Answer:

The concept of Purushartha is one of the most important contributions of Indian philosophy to human civilization. Purushartha means 'the goal of human being' or 'the purpose of human existence.' Indian philosophy identifies four fundamental goals of human life known as the Chatur Purusharthas — Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha.

1. Dharma (Righteousness and Duty): Dharma is the first and most important Purushartha. It refers to the moral, ethical, and spiritual duties of a person. Dharma is not just a religious concept — it is a way of

living that ensures harmony and order in society. Each person has a Svadharma (personal duty) based on their role in life — as a student, parent, teacher, ruler, etc. Dharma guides a person in pursuing all other goals in a righteous manner.

2. Artha (Wealth and Prosperity): Artha refers to the pursuit of material wealth, security, and worldly success. Indian philosophy does not consider wealth to be evil. Rather, it is encouraged as a necessary means for living a comfortable and responsible life. However, Artha must be pursued within the boundaries set by Dharma — meaning wealth should be earned honestly and used for the welfare of family and society.

3. Kama (Desire and Pleasure): Kama refers to the fulfillment of desires, including emotional, aesthetic, and sensory pleasures. The Kamasutra, written by Vatsyayana, is a classical text on this Purushartha. Indian philosophy acknowledges that desires are a natural part of human life. However, like Artha, Kama must also be regulated by Dharma so that desires do not lead a person towards selfishness or harm to others.

4. Moksha (Liberation): Moksha is the highest goal of human life. It refers to liberation from the cycle of birth and death (Samsara) and the attainment of eternal bliss and union with the ultimate reality (Brahman or God). Moksha can be achieved through Jnana (knowledge), Bhakti (devotion), Karma (action), or Raja Yoga (meditation). It is the ultimate purpose behind all human striving.

The Four Purusharthas together present a balanced and complete vision of human life — combining material, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions. They show that Indian philosophy is not just about spirituality but about living a full and meaningful life in this world.

UNIT 3: Indian Traditional Scientific Knowledge, Technology and Practices

Q5. Describe the traditional agricultural practices and the significance of Ayurveda and plant-based medicines in ancient India.

[10 Marks]

Answer:

Ancient India had a highly developed system of agriculture and medicine that was deeply connected to nature and human wellbeing. These traditional practices reflect the scientific and practical genius of Indian civilization.

Traditional Agricultural Practices: Agriculture in ancient India was not merely an economic activity but a sacred duty. Indian farmers had a deep understanding of soil types, water management, crop rotation, and seasonal cycles. The Rigveda and Atharvaveda contain references to plowing, sowing, and harvesting. Texts like Krishi Parashara (a treatise on agriculture by sage Parashara) provide detailed instructions on farming techniques. Traditional water management systems like stepwells (Vav), tanks, and irrigation canals were extensively used. Organic farming using cow dung, neem, and other natural substances was practiced to maintain soil fertility. Crop diversity was maintained through the cultivation of a wide variety of grains, vegetables, and fruits. The concept of sustainable agriculture was deeply embedded in Indian culture through festivals, rituals, and customs related to farming.

Ayurveda — The Science of Life: Ayurveda is one of the oldest medical systems in the world, dating back to more than 5,000 years. The word 'Ayurveda' comes from two Sanskrit words — 'Ayu' (life) and 'Veda' (knowledge). It is a holistic system of medicine that promotes health and wellbeing by maintaining a balance between the body, mind, and spirit. The two main classical texts of Ayurveda are the Charaka Samhita (focused on internal medicine) and the Sushruta Samhita (focused on surgery and anatomy). Ayurveda explains the human body in terms of three Doshas (biological energies) — Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. Health is maintained when these three Doshas are in balance.

Plant-based Medicines: Indian traditional medicine makes extensive use of plants, herbs, roots, and natural substances for healing. Common medicinal plants used in Ayurveda include: Tulsi (Holy Basil) — used for respiratory problems and immunity; Neem — used as an antibacterial and antifungal agent; Turmeric (Haldi) — used as an anti-inflammatory and healing agent; Ashwagandha — used for stress relief and energy; Amla (Indian Gooseberry) — rich in Vitamin C and used for digestion and immunity. The Atharvaveda contains hundreds of references to plant-based remedies for various diseases. The Vanaspati Shastra (science of plants) was a well-developed field of study in ancient India.

These traditional practices demonstrate that ancient India had a deep understanding of nature and developed sustainable and effective methods for food production and healthcare that are still relevant and valued today.

Q6. Explain the sixty-four art forms (64 Kalas) and the traditional metallurgy and town planning practices in ancient India.

[10 Marks]

Answer:

Ancient India had a sophisticated culture that encompassed a wide range of arts, crafts, science, and technology. The sixty-four Kalas and the advanced metallurgical and town planning practices are evidence of this rich civilization.

Sixty-Four Art Forms (64 Kalas): The sixty-four Kalas are a comprehensive list of arts, crafts, and skills that were considered essential for a well-rounded individual in ancient India. They are described in texts like the Kamasutra and various Puranas. These arts span music, dance, painting, sculpture, cooking, mathematics, astronomy, and many more. Some important Kalas include: Gita (vocal music), Vadya (instrumental music), Nritya (dance), Natya (drama), Alekhya (painting and drawing), Gandha-yukti (making perfumes), Dhaatu-vada (metallurgy), Paka-kala (cooking), Vastu-vidya (architecture), and Akshar-mushtika-kathana (cryptography and writing). The sixty-four Kalas represent the idea that education in ancient India was holistic — it covered both intellectual and practical skills.

Metallurgy: India had an advanced knowledge of metals and metal working. Ancient Indians were skilled in working with copper, gold, zinc, mercury, lead, silver, and iron. The Iron Pillar of Delhi (built in the 4th century CE) is a famous example of ancient Indian metallurgical expertise — it has resisted corrosion for over 1,600 years. Indian craftsmen produced high-quality steel known as Wootz steel, which was exported to the Roman Empire and was famous for its sharpness and durability. Mercury was used in Rasa Shastra (alchemical science) for medicinal and other purposes.

Town Planning and Vastu Shastra: Ancient Indian civilization had well-planned cities. The Indus Valley Civilization (Harappa and Mohenjo-daro) had remarkable town planning with wide roads, drainage systems, granaries, and public baths. Vastu Shastra is the ancient Indian science of architecture and spatial arrangement. It provides guidelines for the design and construction of buildings, towns, and temples based on principles of direction, energy flow, and harmony with nature. The concept of Vastu is based on five elements — earth, water, fire, air, and space — and aims to create environments that promote health, prosperity, and happiness. Vastu Shastra was applied in the construction of great temples like the Brihadeeswarar Temple and the Konark Sun Temple.

UNIT 4: Bharatiya Itihasa and Jnana Prampara

Q7. What is the meaning and significance of the Astadasa Puranas? Discuss the importance of Ramayana and Mahabharata as Itihasa.

[10 Marks]

Answer:

The Puranas and the great epics (Itihasas) form the backbone of Indian cultural, historical, and spiritual tradition. They are not just religious texts but encyclopedias of Indian civilization containing history, philosophy, mythology, science, and ethics.

Meaning and Significance of Astadasa Puranas: The word 'Purana' means 'ancient' or 'old narratives.' There are eighteen major Puranas (Astadasa Mahapuranas) in the Hindu tradition. These include the Vishnu Purana, Bhagavata Purana, Shiva Purana, Brahma Purana, Markandeya Purana, and others. The Puranas deal with five major topics known as Pancha Lakshanas: (1) Sarga — creation of the universe; (2) Pratisarga — secondary creation or re-creation; (3) Vamsha — genealogy of gods and sages; (4) Manvantara — periods of Manu (progenitor of humanity); (5) Vamshanucharita — history of royal dynasties. The Puranas serve as a bridge between Vedic knowledge and common people — they convey complex philosophical ideas through stories, parables, and narratives that are easy to understand. They also contain information about geography, astronomy, medicine, and social ethics.

Ramayana: The Ramayana, composed by Sage Valmiki, is one of the greatest epics of the world. It contains approximately 24,000 verses (shlokas) divided into seven chapters (Kandas). The story follows the life of Lord Rama — the ideal king, husband, son, and human being. The Ramayana teaches values like loyalty, courage, righteousness, devotion, and compassion. It portrays the ideal relationships between parents and children, husband and wife, brothers, and citizens and their ruler. The Ramayana has influenced Indian culture, arts, music, dance, and values for thousands of years and continues to be a living tradition.

Mahabharata: The Mahabharata, composed by Sage Vyasa, is the longest epic poem in the world with over 100,000 verses. It tells the story of the great war between the Pandavas and Kauravas. It contains the Bhagavad Gita, the philosophical and spiritual dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna, which is one of the most important texts in the world. The Mahabharata deals with complex moral dilemmas, duties, and the nature of justice. It presents the idea that Dharma (righteousness) must always prevail over Adharma (unrighteousness), even at great personal cost. The Mahabharata is often described as a text that contains everything — 'Yadihasti tadanyatra yannehasti na tattkvachit' (what is here is everywhere; what is not here is nowhere).

Q8. Explain the meaning and importance of the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. Also discuss the concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.

[10 Marks]

Answer:

The Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita are among the most profound and influential philosophical texts in human history. They form the philosophical core of Indian civilization and continue to inspire millions of people around the world.

The Upanishads: The Upanishads are a collection of philosophical texts that form the concluding part of the Vedas, which is why they are also known as Vedanta (end of the Vedas). There are 108 Upanishads in total, of which 10 to 13 are considered the principal Upanishads. These include the Brihadaranyaka,

Chandogya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Mundaka, and Mandukya Upanishads. The Upanishads explore the nature of the self (Atman), the ultimate reality (Brahman), and the relationship between the two. The central teaching of the Upanishads is expressed in the Mahavakyas (great sayings) such as 'Aham Brahmasmi' (I am Brahman), 'Tat Tvam Asi' (Thou art That), and 'Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma' (All this is Brahman). The Upanishadic culture teaches that the purpose of life is self-realization — to know one's true nature as pure, infinite, and eternal consciousness. This knowledge liberates the individual from ignorance, suffering, and the cycle of birth and death.

The Bhagavad Gita: The Bhagavad Gita is a 700-verse dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna that is part of the Mahabharata. It is set on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Its main aims and objectives are: (1) to guide individuals in performing their duties without attachment to results (Nishkama Karma); (2) to promote devotion (Bhakti) to God as the path to liberation; (3) to encourage the pursuit of knowledge (Jnana) about the true nature of the self; (4) to explain the concept of the eternal soul (Atman) which is beyond birth and death; (5) to promote equanimity in joy and sorrow, success and failure. The Gita has been studied and praised by great thinkers like Mahatma Gandhi, Albert Einstein, and Swami Vivekananda.

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: This Sanskrit phrase means 'The World is One Family.' It comes from the Maha Upanishad and is also reflected in the Rigveda. This concept represents India's vision of global unity, peace, and brotherhood. It teaches that all human beings, regardless of nationality, religion, or culture, are members of one global family. In the context of Economy and Globalisation, this concept promotes fair trade, mutual cooperation, and sustainable development for the benefit of all people on earth.

UNIT 5: Humanities and Social Sciences in IKS

Q9. Discuss the Indian approach to Health, Wellness and Psychology with reference to Ayurveda, Yoga, and the Triguna System.

[10 Marks]

Answer:

Indian Knowledge System has a very comprehensive understanding of health and wellness that goes beyond the physical body. It integrates the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of health. Ayurveda, Yoga, and the Triguna System form the foundation of the Indian approach to health and psychology.

Ayurveda and Health: Ayurveda defines health as 'Swasthya' — a state in which the Doshas (Vata, Pitta, Kapha), the digestive fire (Agni), the tissues (Dhatus), and the mental state are all in balance. Ayurveda promotes health through proper diet (Ahara), lifestyle (Vihara), herbs, and therapies like Panchakarma (five purification therapies). It gives special importance to sleep (Nidra) as one of the three pillars of health along with food and celibacy. Ayurvedic texts describe the qualities of proper food, the importance of eating according to one's constitution (Prakriti), and the effects of various foods on the mind and body.

Role of Water in Wellbeing: Water is considered a sacred and healing element in Indian tradition. Ayurveda prescribes the drinking of warm water (Ushna Jal) for various health conditions. The concept of Jala Chikitsa (water therapy) is described in classical Ayurvedic texts. Water is also used in various purification rituals (Snana) for physical and mental cleansing.

Yoga as a Way of Life: Yoga is one of the greatest gifts of India to the world. Ashtanga Yoga (Eight-limbed Yoga) as described by Sage Patanjali in the Yoga Sutras consists of: (1) Yama (ethical restraints), (2) Niyama (self-discipline), (3) Asana (physical postures), (4) Pranayama (breath control), (5) Pratyahara (withdrawal of senses), (6) Dharana (concentration), (7) Dhyana (meditation), (8) Samadhi (state of absorption or enlightenment). Yoga promotes physical health, mental clarity, emotional balance, and spiritual growth. It is now practiced by millions of people worldwide and has been recognized by the United Nations through the International Day of Yoga on June 21.

Indian Psychology and the Triguna System: Indian psychology is rooted in the concept of the three Gunas — Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. These are the three fundamental qualities or modes of nature that influence the human mind and behavior. Sattva represents purity, clarity, wisdom, and harmony. Rajas represents activity, passion, desire, and restlessness. Tamas represents inertia, dullness, ignorance, and heaviness. The goal of Indian psychology is to increase Sattva and reduce Tamas in the mind. The Indian approach to psychology integrates the Body-Mind-Intellect-Consciousness complex, recognizing that psychological health cannot be separated from physical, intellectual, and spiritual health.

Q10. Explain the Indian approach to Governance and Public Administration with reference to Ramayana, Arthashastra, and the concept of Kautilyan State.

[10 Marks]

Answer:

India has a long and rich tradition of governance and public administration. Ancient Indian texts like the Ramayana, the Arthashastra, and the Mahabharata contain detailed and sophisticated ideas about the ideal state, the duties of rulers, the welfare of citizens, and the principles of just governance.

Governance in the Ramayana: The Ramayana presents the ideal of Rama Rajya — the rule of Lord Rama, which is considered the golden standard of good governance. In Rama Rajya, every citizen was happy, healthy, and prosperous. The king was the servant of the people, not their master. He was bound by Dharma and was accountable to the welfare of even the weakest and most ordinary citizen. The Ramayana teaches that a good ruler must be just, compassionate, self-disciplined, and willing to sacrifice personal happiness for the welfare of the people. The concept of Praja Palana (protection and welfare of subjects) is central to Rama's governance.

Arthashastra and Public Administration: Kautilya's Arthashastra is one of the most comprehensive and practical manuals of statecraft ever written. It covers all aspects of governance including taxation, economic policy, foreign policy, military strategy, law and justice, and public welfare. Key principles from the Arthashastra include: (1) the king's happiness lies in the happiness of his subjects — 'Prajā Sukhe Sukham Rajnah'; (2) the state must provide security, justice, and economic wellbeing to all citizens; (3) the civil service must be efficient, honest, and accountable; (4) foreign policy should be based on pragmatism — using diplomacy (Sama), gifts (Dana), division (Bheda), and force (Danda) as appropriate. The Arthashastra describes a highly organized administrative structure with ministers, departments, spies, and inspectors to ensure good governance.

The Kautilyan State: The Kautilyan State is based on the concept of Saptanga — the seven elements of the state: (1) Svami (the ruler), (2) Amatya (ministers), (3) Janapada (territory and population), (4) Durga (fortified capital), (5) Kosha (treasury), (6) Danda (army and justice), and (7) Mitra (allies). According to Kautilya, a strong state is one in which all seven elements function properly and in coordination. The welfare of the people (Lokasangraha) is the primary goal of the state.

In conclusion, the Indian tradition of governance emphasizes the welfare of all citizens, ethical leadership, and a well-organized state — values that remain highly relevant in modern governance and public administration.